Some Dos and Don’ts of Teaching about Race, Culture, and Identity

This guidance can be used to evaluate resources, instructional practices, and assessment design.

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<th>Do</th>
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| Affirm the dignity and humanity of all people, and foster empathy. | ● Generalize or treat groups of people as a monolith.  
● Dehumanize by invoking stereotypes or reducing groups of people to a single characteristic.  
● Represent people as if they belong to an earlier or more “primitive” era of human history.  
● Portray one group of people as biologically or culturally inferior to another. |
| Emphasize the perspectives and experiences of people from oppressed or marginalized groups. | ● Erase marginalized groups’ experiences  
● Use the dominant group’s perspective as the primary lens through which to view issues, events, and other groups.  
● Present the dominant group as “us,” and “other” less powerful groups as “them.” One variation of this is to make generalizations about people from a particular place (Virginia, the U.S.) that only reflect the characteristics of the dominant. |
| Call out past and present injustice, engaging systematic oppression and violence in ways that are respectful and developmentally appropriate. | ● Use language that minimizes or erases atrocities. (“Africans settled in Virginia” versus “Africans were brought against their will to Virginia”)  
● Portray injustice as inevitable or necessary for some other purpose, such as economic growth  
● Use language, make comparisons, or design learning experiences that trivialize injustice, oppression, or violence |